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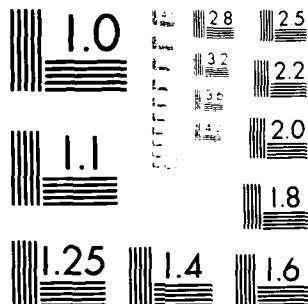
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Commander James John Tritten

October 1983

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SOVIET NAVAL WAR FIGHTING CAPABILITIES

By: Commander James John Tritten

To speculate about the potential war fighting roles of the Soviet Navy, one must do both an in depth analysis of what forces are actually capable of fighting and how the Soviets say they will use them. This essay will deal with the actual war fighting capabilities of the Soviet Navy.

The numbers of ships which the Soviet Union could use to fight a war at sea are impressive. Official U.S. government statistics range from 2069 warships and 755 auxiliaries<sup>1/</sup> to 1685 warships and 760 auxiliaries.<sup>2/</sup> Other sources tend to downplay the threat by referring only to major combat ships or only active submarines. Complicating the question is the lack of clear cut guidance as to whether or not civilian merchant and research ships which have obvious military utility should be counted in the category of warships.<sup>3/</sup>

If the Congress or general public perceive that the government is overstating the threat, there is a risk that support for U.S. maritime and Navy shipbuilding programs will falter. In some regards, it is justifiable to only consider major combatants but in other regards, the "worst case" must be considered.

Naval ships do not normally plan to engage an enemy without forming into groupings called task groups, task units and the like. A standard grouping for the U.S. Navy is a carrier battle group (CVBG). A similar group for the Soviet Navy would be an anti-carrier (ACW) or anti-submarine warfare (ASW) group of one cruiser, a few escorts, and submarines.

The types of groupings which would be formed in time of war would depend on the area of the seas in which operations were to be conducted. Operations in the Barents Sea under the protection of land based aviation might not resemble operations in the Western Mediterranean.

To discuss the threat, it is necessary to first address how many war fighting ships are in the Soviet Navy, to which of the four major home Fleets they are assigned, how many units are forward deployed, and then how one could expect these units to form up given the geographic realities of their location.

SIZE OF THEIR FLEETS

Very few of the standard reference works<sup>4/</sup> on Navies and other military forces appear to agree on exactly how many of each type ship there is in the Soviet Navy. By comparing the statistics, it appears that the Soviets have some 633 active major combatants of frigate size or larger.<sup>5/</sup> There are an additional 80 major amphibious ships.<sup>6/</sup>

Within this active Navy fleet are some 269 cruise missile and torpedo firing attack submarines, 283 major surface combatants, and 81 combat ballistic missile submarines. In active status but not included in the above totals are an additional 31 submarines modified for research, development, training, or miscellaneous missions (including 4 ballistic missile subs). The Reserve Fleet has another 108 attack submarines and 25 major surface combatants. There are 6 additional naval-type corvettes and 108 smaller coastal and patrol combatants operated by the KGB Frontier Forces.<sup>7/</sup> The Navy has some 106 patrol combatants, 217 coastal combatants, and 260 active and 18 reserve mine warfare<sup>8/</sup> ships also excluded from the above totals. The Soviets have hundreds of additional "craft" (generally smaller than 100 tons) and auxiliary ships.

The Soviet Navy assigns major units to one of four home fleets. The Northern Fleet, with headquarters in Severomorsk, has some 171 combat submarines and 73 major active surface combatants. The Pacific Fleet with headquarters in Vladivostok, has some 118 combat submarines and 85 major surface combatants. Both of these Fleets have the latest and every variety of naval forces and are the two main Fleets.

The Black Sea Fleet is substantially smaller with some 19 combat submarines and 77 major surface combatants. The Baltic Fleet has 42 combat submarines and 48 major surface combatants. The Baltic Fleet has recently been described as a training fleet.<sup>9/</sup> Each fleet has sufficient amphibious warships to support the limited number of Soviet Naval Infantry assigned.

The need to maintain these four distinct fleets is a major handicap on the Soviet Navy since the distances between each generally precludes operations in direct support of one another. Each fleet is further

degraded by the lack of ice-free bases (except Murmansk) requiring year-round icebreaking efforts. Only portions of the Pacific Fleet have direct access to the open oceans. Most of the Soviet Navy has to pass through choke points in order to exit from their home ports.

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#### FORWARD DEPLOYMENTS

The Soviet Navy maintains roughly 22 of its long-range attack submarines and 20 of its long range major combatants in transit to or from, or on forward deployment.<sup>10/</sup> These ships are located in some seven major ocean areas and operate beyond the range of land-based naval aviation which could provide air protection.

The warfighting significance of the forward deployed units is two-fold. First, the number of ships on forward deployment draw down the four home fleets and detract from the ability to sustain naval operations in continuous waters. Secondly, they will have some warfighting mission should deterrence fail. It is possible, of course, that forward deployed units could be withdrawn in time of crisis or augmented from additional assets in the home fleets.

In the Atlantic Ocean, beyond the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap (G-I-UK Gap) and also in the Pacific, the Soviets deploy Yankee class ballistic missile submarines.<sup>11/</sup> These subs are a part of the retaliatory forces which threaten to deliver a "crushing blow" to the United States. Due to the shorter ranges of the SS-N-6 series missiles which they carry, it must be accepted that forward deployed Yankees are a "use it or lose it" force whose likely targets would include command, control, and communication and intelligence facilities (C<sup>3</sup>I), the U.S. National Command Authority (NCA), bomber and tanker bases, and missile silos.<sup>12/</sup> Additional other targets would probably be naval and maritime forces in port and airlift bases.

Soviet Yankees are an excellent weapons system for executing a nuclear decapitation strike, participating in damage limiting strikes against the bomber/tanker force, in attempting to pin down missiles until the arrival of distant ICBMs, and in eliminating strategic mobility and naval assets.

Due to the extremely long transit times from their home bases, it is unlikely that the USSR could quickly increase this already formidable threat without giving the U.S. ample strategic warning and the opportunity to take countermeasures. Should the Soviets strike first, it is



doubtful that even fully generated U.S. ASW forces could prevent a significant number of the SS-N-6 missiles from being fired.

Forward deployed Yankees which have fired missiles remain legitimate targets for U.S. ASW forces since it might be possible some missiles did not operate. Furthermore, Yankee, like any submarine, would pose a mine or torpedo threat to the sea lines of communication (SLOCs).

The Soviet Navy operates only a limited number of surface ships and submarines on deployment in the mid-Atlantic, Indian and mid-Pacific Oceans.<sup>13/</sup> These ships could form into ACW or ASW task groups and attack U.S./NATO deployed forces. Alternately, they might attempt to threaten the SLOCs or protect Soviet merchants, research, or fishing vessels.

The lack of sea-based naval aviation and sufficient antiair warfare (AAW) capability is the clear limiting factor in the survivability of these particular forward deployed units. A second major limiting factor in their wartime use is the lack of sustainability due to both design and the absence of a satisfactory logistics train. In general, it has only been recently that Soviet warships have been built with major weapons systems reloads.<sup>14/</sup>

Although it might be possible to sustain operations in the Indian Ocean, mid-Pacific, or mid-Atlantic with the assistance of merchant ships and other auxiliaries, these forward deployed Naval units are probably expendable in time of war. Their main missions appear to be the "defense of state interests" in time of peace. Their presence adds flexibility to the Politburo's options in distant waters and complicates any U.S. defense strategy.

The U.S. cannot ignore the presence of forward deployed Soviet battle groups and would be forced to expend resources to eliminate them. It is certain that the U.S. would succeed in any undertaking to eliminate them but might have to pay a high price for doing so.

Smaller naval detachments are found off the West Coast of Africa and upon occasion, in the Caribbean. Again, the primary mission of these assets appears to be political and pre-war. They would not be survivable to minimal U.S. lateral excursions.<sup>15/</sup>

Recently, the Soviet Union has been upgrading its presence in the South China Sea using former U.S. facilities in Vietnam.<sup>16/</sup> It would appear that they intend to place an ACW/ASW group as well as additional submarines in the area. The explanation of the presence would appear to be both political support for their ally and an enhanced strategic position in time of war.

The South China Sea Patrol will complicate China's maritime defense, threaten the vital SLOCs between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and will complicate U.S. warfighting and pre-war planning.

With the introduction of an additional threat in Southeast Asia, the U.S. may be forced to expend further resources in this area in time of war which would probably be needed elsewhere. Partially to plan for such a contingency, the U.S. has requested the Japanese to increase their defense commitments.

In time of crisis or war, a South China Sea Patrol might be survivable if it remained within range of land-based aircraft operating from Vietnam. It could disrupt the SLOCs or threaten U.S. bases in the Philippines. It could remain in protected waters and assume the role of a "fleet in being" which need not actually fight but merely tie up Western or other forces which would be assigned to counter them.

The final area of forward deployment is the Mediterranean. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron<sup>17/</sup> is of sufficient size to be properly termed a "fleet." It normally contains over eleven major surface combatants and approximately that number of submarines.<sup>18/</sup> These units could easily form up into three ACW/ASW groups, one for each U.S./French CVBG. The size of the Soviet squadron could easily be increased rapidly by surface ships from the Black Sea Fleet.<sup>19/</sup> This has been done in the past during crises and should be expected in the future.

There has been a great deal written about potential roles of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron in time of peace, crisis, or war. In war, the mission which must be attributed is damage limitation and strategic diversion.

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron potentially lacks air cover and sustainability. Naval aviation would have to successfully penetrate Greek, Turkish, and USAF air defenses. Soviet crews might operate

aircraft from pre-positioned supplies in North Africa. The Mediterranean Squadron's warfighting ability could be substantially enhanced if nations such as Libya or Yugoslavia chose to support the USSR.

It would be difficult for the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron alone to survive coordinated NATO Naval and land-based air attacks. The Soviet fleet could be reinforced easily as long as NATO held crucial choke points and made judicious use of mines.

The Soviet tactical use for their Mediterranean Squadron would appear to be to extract the highest possible price from the West for its continued peacetime deployment of vital CVBGs in this enclosed sea. If they are successful in this mission, they would perform an important strategic objective since the loss of NATO CVBGs in the Mediterranean could influence the outcome of a battle for the Atlantic SLOCs.<sup>20/</sup>

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron is a one-shot throw away asset which continues to bait the West into fighting its major assets in places of the Soviet's choice on terms more favorable to the USSR. Unfortunately, there is no easy out for NATO to this dilemma due to a wide variety of political reasons.

### MAIN FLEET AREAS

The potential wartime missions of forward deployed units is distinct from home fleets which may operate in contiguous waters. While the forward deployed areas generally lack air protection and mutual support, contiguous waters may be defended using land-based aviation (naval or other) as well as the forces of allied nations.

Baltic Sea. Although the Baltic Fleet is not significantly depleted by deploying units, it is not equipped with many ships or those of the first-line type assets found in the Northern and Pacific fleets. Should the Soviet Union desire to conduct a war with no strategic warning and fight with only the assets normally at sea in the Baltic, they could conduct only minimal naval operations. The contribution of German and Polish units to a preemptive attack would be modest.

At best, the combined Navies in the Baltic could provide sufficient assets in a surprise war scenario to conduct offensive mining of strategic waters, defensive mining of the Gulf of Finland and home bases, and perhaps to support an airborne operation against Bornholm. Limited strikes by submarines primarily would also be expected.

In order to conduct a more aggressive maritime campaign in the Baltic, the Soviet Navy would have to give strategic warning by surging additional assets to sea perhaps by the ruse of an exercise. Additional submarines and major surface combatants would permit a limited amphibious campaign in support of airborne operations against one main objective; probably either Bornholm or Kiel. If Germany and Poland participated, a second amphibious operation might be possible, minesweeping and air support would be enhanced.

Complicating Soviet Naval operations is the Swedish Navy and the possibility of air/cruise missile attacks against the Soviet Union originating from NATO nations or waters outside the Baltic. It is unlikely that the Soviet Navy would not leave sufficient assets in the Baltic to deal with these potential threats: their role thus would also be a first line of defense. Presumably the USSR would

exert sufficient political leverage upon Finland that there would be no obstacle to the complete defensive mining of the Gulf of Finland in time of war.<sup>21/</sup>

The Soviets should be able to deny access to the Baltic of additional NATO warships through the use of mine fields in the Danish Straits and submarines supporting the mine fields. The threat of surprise mining in the Baltic by both NATO and the USSR is very real.

Control over the Danish Straits and neutralization of any threat from the maritime theater appear to be the primary missions of the Baltic Fleet. Support for a combined arms operation to take Northern Germany and Denmark are also vital. Navy units would be expected to escort additional Army divisions embarked in Soviet, German, and Polish merchant ships. The Soviet Navy would likewise maintain the LOC from the USSR to forward land positions which would undoubtedly be much easier by sea than by land.<sup>22/</sup>

The Soviets have an option to mobilize (or disguise a mobilization as an exercise) and then conduct military operations. If this occurred, additional Warsaw Pact and Soviet combatants, amphibious units, and mine warfare forces would be available. Until the uncertainty of Sweden's participation in any war is settled, it is unlikely that Baltic surface forces would deploy beyond the Danish Straits outside the protective umbrella of land based air power.

It is possible, however, that if mobilization were desirable prior to a war, submarines would exit the Baltic and station themselves in the English Channel and North Sea. Some may be assigned this mission if a surprise attack were attempted or a minimal surge took place but under mobilization. There appears to be an excess of submarines available and a lack of Baltic Sea missions. One should expect submarines to assist merchant ships<sup>23/</sup> in mine operations as well as torpedo attacks.

The Baltic Fleet additionally has a limited number of older ballistic missile submarines assigned. These would undoubtedly be assigned a theater nuclear strike role, most likely against maritime targets such as ports and naval bases on the North Sea shores of Germany, Denmark, and Norway.

Black Sea. The Black Sea Fleet is routinely depleted by a sizable forward deployment to the Mediterranean and units assigned to the Caspian Sea Flotilla. Substantial additional assets exist to surge deploy surface forces to the Mediterranean in a peacetime crisis but this might not be desirable in time of war.

If the Soviets chose to commence hostilities without giving strategic warning, the Fleet present in the Black Sea would be capable of only minor operations. A few submarines or major combatants could take up station near the Turkish Straits and counter any entry from the Mediterranean of NATO warships. The few Turkish naval assets in the Black Sea would be immediate targets. Contribution of additional Warsaw Pact naval forces would only be incidental.

Surface ships and submarines deployed to the Mediterranean, however, would be able to accomplish a successful surprise attack mission as long as NATO nations continued to deploy their high value Navy units in this enclosed sea. In a normal relaxed peacetime posture, without tactical warning, the Soviets would probably be able to successfully engage forward deployed U.S. carriers with existing submarine and surface assets. The degree to which such a pre-emptive strike would succeed would depend on the ability to avoid giving tactical warning and would probably require Soviet use of nuclear warheads.

If the Soviets decided to provide strategic warning and surge deploy additional assets or fully mobilize the Black Sea Fleet, they would be capable of sending additional units into the Mediterranean. This is often assumed by many Western analysts and cannot be ruled out.

What benefit would such a reinforcement provide overall Soviet combined arms operations? Even if the entire Black Sea Fleet was in the Mediterranean, geography favors NATO. The Soviets would have to fight their way past numerous choke points and be within striking range of NATO land-based air assets.

In war, it is also likely that the USSR will not deploy substantial additional assets to the Mediterranean Squadron beyond that necessary for that fleet to accomplish its primary missions of strategic diversion and destruction of U.S. and French carriers. The Soviets might also attempt a strategic ASW campaign against NATO ballistic missile submarines.

By retaining the Black Sea Fleet in the Black Sea, except for some minor reinforcement of the Mediterranean Squadron, the Soviets gain in three ways. First, they support land operations which will undoubtedly be attempted against the area around the Turkish Straits. Most of the surface units in the Black Sea would be useful to support Army operations and to threaten the northern coastal area of Turkey thus diverting attention from the flanks.

Secondly, the Navy would logically be a first line of defense against NATO air/cruise missile strikes originating from Turkey or from surviving ships in the Mediterranean. It is difficult to picture the USSR leaving the Black Sea undefended except by air power.

Finally, by withholding the fleet and dispersal to avoid easy destruction, the Soviets have the nucleus of a post-war fleet which can then be used to resupply the Mediterranean Squadron and important Northern and Pacific Fleets.<sup>24/</sup>

Northwest Pacific. Although it is true that the Pacific Fleet is now the largest fleet<sup>25/</sup> in the Soviet Navy, it is depleted by forward deployments and faced with severe geographic constraints. The major surface combatants which would be available to conduct naval operations if a decision were made to fight a war from a standing start would be in waters subject to interdiction by U.S. air power in Japan and Korea.

If for some reason these units were still inside the Sea of Japan and chose to attempt to exit, they must pass through critical choke points making their exit into the Pacific uncertain at best. This problem would face the surface fleet even under surge or mobilization conditions.

The submarine is considered to be the primary ship in the Soviet Navy. Many would have access to the high seas without going through choke points. The Soviets maintain a major submarine based in Petropavlovsk and are reportedly now constructing another base at the northern tip of Simushir Island in the middle of Kuril chain.<sup>26/</sup>

Of all the submarines, the ballistic missile submarine is considered the capital ship of the Soviet Navy. The Pacific Fleet probably keeps a few Delta's on patrol at any one time and could probably easily surge additional units of this class as well as Yankees and

older subs capable of theater strikes with their shorter range missiles.

The Soviets have chosen to deploy their Delta's in the relatively inaccessible Sea of Okhotsk.<sup>27/</sup> The theory behind this deployment is that U.S. ASW assets would have a great deal of difficulty in attacking Soviet SSBNs due to the need to pass through strategic choke points and to operate within range of land-based aviation and smaller naval combatants.

The concept of a sanctuary which is actively defended by surface, air, and subsurface units behind a geographical barrier is foreign to Western concepts of strategic missile submarine deployment. It could be effective in a war, however.

The Soviets can deploy Delta and other ballistic missile submarines in a protected sanctuary to be either used as a secure nuclear reserve against the U.S. or China (Delta's SS-N-8 and 18 missiles can reach the U.S. from the Sea of Okhotsk) or in participation with other combined arms operations in the Far East.

Perhaps the only type weapons which could threaten these submarines would be strategic missiles with nuclear depth bombs. It is unlikely that the U.S. has sufficient missiles to deliver such an attack nor has the presence of any such capability ever been revealed.<sup>28/</sup> An effective ABM system in the Aleutians could negate the Soviet advantage of a sanctuary.

Since the SSBNs are deployed in the Sea of Okhotsk, defense does not require the use of major fleet assets. Smaller combatants operating in conjunction with shore based surveillance units could probably exact a high price from any U.S. or Allied submarines attempting to attack the Soviet's SSBNs. Defense could also include the use of larger assets and submarines which themselves might be a part of a strategic reserve.

If a war were to be fought from a static position without giving strategic warning, the Soviets could accomplish their primary Pacific Fleet local mission of defense of the sanctuary. A surge with only minimal addition of assets would give them the capability to deploy additional ballistic missile submarines and mount a small amphibious operation. Likely targets would be the La Perouse Strait or perhaps



one of the other choke points constraining the surface fleet. Participation of the North Korean Navy would complicate U.S./Japanese ASW efforts.

Should the Soviets decide to mobilize, they might be able to attempt to break their surface fleet out of the Sea of Japan or mount a campaign against the Japanese Self Defense Forces along with the U.S. Seventh Fleet assets normally in Japanese or nearby waters. The outcome of such a campaign is uncertain due to the uncertainty of host nations in the area supporting naval engagements with land-based air power.

If these land-based air units were not available or the Japanese and South Koreans did not choose to participate in a war between the U.S. and the USSR, the Soviet Pacific Fleet would only have to face U.S. naval forces. In this case, the most modern carrier battle groups would be required.

Such a challenge would eliminate the possibility of any "swing" of forces between the U.S. Pacific Fleet into the Atlantic or Indian Oceans. The Soviet Pacific Fleet already has forward deployed units to target Western carriers in the Indian Ocean and threaten any attempting to transit the South China Sea.

The potential role of the Soviet Pacific Fleet in their own contiguous waters is difficult to determine. Much depends upon what China, both Koreas, and Japan do. One can surmise the surface fleet will be bottled up or alternately be free to join submarines in the Pacific. Given the right kind of climate, one might even speculate upon a Soviet swing strategy of movement of excess forces from Asia to Europe.

Norwegian Sea/Barents Sea. The potential use of the Northern Fleet in contiguous waters and/or the Atlantic remains one of the most actively debated topics in Western naval circles. Since deterrence of a long war in Europe rests in part upon successful sealift resupply and reinforcement from North America, the question is not merely of interest to the Navy

As in the Pacific, Delta class submarines are withheld in a sanctuary. Theater strike submarines also can deploy here. Although not as geographically protected, Western ASW efforts would be severely taxed in the face of Soviet active air, surface, and subsurface defenses.

There are sufficient assets in the Northern Fleet to defend contiguous waters if a war were fought with forces on hand and already at sea. The Northern Fleet would, however, not be capable of any other mission without surging and giving strategic warning.

If a surge took place, the number of SSBN/SSBs would increase as would the ACW/ASW groups necessary to protect these waters. Only a modest capability is required to support seizure of Svalbard by Soviet "civilians" already on the island<sup>29/</sup> and to take Bear Island and Jan Mayen. Naval forces might provide assistance to a combined arms operation in Northern Norway with the small Naval Infantry contingent being assigned a shock troops role against the sea flanks.

In a surge, the Soviets could get additional submarines into the Norwegian Sea to extend and reinforce the defensive perimeter. Upon full mobilization, the number of total submarines in excess of those probably assigned to ACW/ASW groups could approach 50. This far exceeds any defensive requirement and represents the likely number of subs which might be expected to sail through the G-I-UK Gap and threaten the SLOCs. Alternately, half this number might attempt to enter the Atlantic while the remainder deployed along the G-I-UK Gap.

Of course, it can be successfully argued that the SLOCs can be cut at the terminal ends using missiles and/or mines more easily than by a war of attrition in the Atlantic. Yet an excess of submarines exists in the Northern Fleet and Admiral Sergi G. Gorshkov has been extolling the virtues of submarines for years to perform this mission.

It appears likely that the Politburo will have the option of cutting the SLOCs with nuclear strikes, mines, or submarines. Should they choose to accomplish this mission without giving strategic warning, it would have to be done with ballistic nuclear missiles and/or mines. If mobilization were permissible, then the SLOCs might be cut using only conventional naval sea forces.

Soviet Naval aviation might be able to assist in a campaign against Norway and Iceland's two major airfields. The loss of Iceland would be catastrophic to NATO unless sufficient big deck aircraft carriers are available to replace the lost airfields.

Finally, the question of the surface fleet needs to be addressed. The Soviet Union did not risk her major surface units in the Great Patriotic war.<sup>30/</sup> If sufficient ASW actions were not taken by the West in the Barents Sea, some of these surface units might be free to deploy into the Norwegian Sea and add to defense in depth or threaten Southern Norway, the Faero and Shetland Islands, or the U.K. itself. If the West did not have aircraft carriers to challenge the Soviet surface fleet, it might be able to sail out from under the umbrella of land-based air protection and assist the submarine force in a SLOC campaign.

Speculation on these issues depends in part upon the quality of ASW actions by NATO in the Norwegian/Barents Sea, the successful maintenance of a NATO air capability in Iceland or from aircraft carriers in nearby waters and in maintenance of a SLOC to Iceland. It appears certain that some submarines would attempt a SLOC campaign if mobilization were allowed to take place. The participation of aircraft and surface ships in such a campaign is not as certain.

### CONCLUSION

Rather than do either a worst case or most likely case analysis of the Soviet Navy threat, this paper has attempted to determine the levels of major combat forces in each of the ocean areas of the world and assess the capability of those forces to conduct warfighting operations from a standing, walking, or running start.

If the Politburo were to conduct a "bolt from the blue" attack upon the U.S. or the West, the analysis shows that only modest gains can be expected from their investment in Soviet Navy conventional forces. These type forces might be able to conduct successful strikes against Western naval forces in the Mediterranean and perhaps elsewhere with success less certain.

The USSR's investment in ballistic missile submarines, however, has purchased the Soviet Union a superb first strike option using their forward based systems. There is no logical reason to suspect that ballistic missile submarines in exposed patrol areas would not participate in a first strike. If true, this probably means continued deployment of such forces in the future and the need to build a replacement for the aging Yankee fleet.

The worst case for the U.S. and the West, would be a bolt from the blue attack from a generated alert position. This could be accomplished easily by mobilizing and dispersing the fleet into distant water areas under the guise of an exercise. The West ought not lower its guard during Soviet/Allied Naval exercises, especially if they become "routine."

If the Soviets surged immediately available assets or were allowed to more fully mobilize their fleets prior to the outbreak of hostilities, their ability to conduct successful traditional battle against opposing navies enters the area of uncertainty. The Soviet Navy still lacks favorable geography, significant sea-based aviation, and sustainability for most of their forces. Deficiencies, however, are being corrected and necessitate appropriate Western responses.

The Soviet Navy lacks the capability to conduct distant water sustained offensive operations in a power projection role against modern

oppositions. They can operate, unfortunately, with some success, in a benign environment against third or fourth world nations. This challenge can be met by either extended deterrence by the U.S. or the rapid upgrading of the threatened nation's military capability by rapid airlift/sealift of high technology force multipliers much as the Soviets have now done in Syria.

It is possible to justify many of the recent improvements in the Soviet Navy as merely additions to the defense theory of force procurement. One must not, however, confuse force procurement justifications with ability to operate in an actual war.

Under the defense of bastions theory for the Soviet Navy surface fleet, the USSR would have no need for conventional aircraft, capable aircraft carriers, hospital ships, deep water amphibious ships, or modern logistics support auxiliaries. Fortunately, sufficient numbers of such units are unlikely to be purchased in the near term to cause a threat to the U.S. itself. These forces, unfortunately, are offensive and well suited for a limited war scenario. Alarm bells should be ringing in the West and Japan and appropriate measures must be taken to counter the threat without overstating it.

NOTES

1. United States, Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981) p. 40.
2. United States, Defense Intelligence Agency, Unclassified Communist Naval Orders of Battle, DDB-1200-124A-82, May 1982.
3. The Soviets themselves state that their civilian manned, unarmed, non-gray painted auxiliaries are the legal equivalent of a warship if they fly the Naval Ensign or the flags of the Auxiliary Vessels, Hydrographic Vessels, or Emergency Rescue Vessels of the Soviet Navy. See Captains 1st Rank M. Ovanesov and R. Sorokin's "Legal Status of Naval Auxiliary Vessels," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 11, 1976, pp. 77-79 and Captain 2nd Rank V. Mikhalev, "The Legal Status of Navy Auxiliary Ships," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 2, 1972, pp. 88-90.
4. Jane's Fighting Ships 1982-83, Combat Fleets of the World 1982-83, IISS The Military Balance 1983-84, and DIA Unclassified Communist Naval Orders of Battle.
5. Includes ballistic missile submarines, cruise missile and torpedo attack submarines, carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and frigates. Excludes all reserve units and some 31 submarines not generally available for warfighting (R&D ballistic missile subs, Yankees undergoing conversion to SSN, training, research, salvage, radar, and command and control subs).
6. Includes LPD, LST, and LSMs.
7. Coastal combatants generally includes both missile and non-missile equipped "craft" designed to operate primarily in coastal areas. This includes fast patrol craft, submarine chasers, torpedo boats. Patrol combatants are also both missile and non-missile equipped "vessels" with the capability to operate beyond inshore waters. This includes patrol combatants and patrol ships.
8. Includes MCS, MSF, and MSC.
9. Commander Bruce W. Watson, USN, Red Navy at Sea: Soviet Naval Operations on the High Seas, 1956-1980 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982) p. 24. Commander Watson is assigned to the Defense Intelligence School.
10. Specific data on Soviet forward deployments is difficult to obtain. Soviet Military Power lists the major ocean areas where surface ships are routinely found but fails to distinguish between war-fighting combatants and other ships. (Map pp. 84-85.) The

majority of the ships listed are auxiliaries. To gain insight into how many of these ships are major combatants, it is necessary to piece together patterns from a wide variety of other sources and infer similar behavior elsewhere.

11. For a most interesting report on Soviet submarine deployments and Western ASW see Patrick J. Sloyan, "Submarines May Lose Cloak of Darkness," Los Angeles Times, November 28, 1982, Part VI, p. 4+. Sloyan cites unnamed NATO officials and claims that between 8-10 total Soviet strategic submarines are on patrol at any one time. This probably does not include Yankees in transit. An earlier study claimed three Yankees off the U.S. East Coast and one off the West Coast; Richard T. Ackley, "The Wartime Role of Soviet SSBNs." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1978, p. 36.
12. For an intriguing look at what a Yankee first strike could accomplish, see James A Winnefeld and Carl H. Builder's "ASW-Now or Never," in the September 1971 U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings.
13. For a listing of the "normal" Indian Ocean Squadron, see Watson, p. 148.
14. The Kirov class CGN has reloadable ASW cruise missiles which might also be useful against surface targets. All earlier cruisers have "one-shot" major weapons systems.
15. Lateral excursions appears to be the successor to the term horizontal escalation. The Caribbean Patrol is not always present but a further strategic complication is the introduction of Foxtrot submarines in the Cuban Navy. If these units were not in port, the U.S. would have to assume they were at sea and divert assets to perform ASW in the Straits of Florida. A major U.S. SLOC to reinforce and resupply Europe in the event of a war passes through these straits.
16. See Newsweek, December 6, 1982, p. 62, Los Angeles Times, February 20, 1983, Part I, p. 8, and Far East Economic Review/Asia Yearbook 1983, p. 22.
17. On occasion, the "Squadron" is referred to in the West as a "fleet". Admiral Elmo Zumwalt claims in his memoirs (On Watch pp. 297-298) that interservice one-upmanship prevents its description as a fleet because it might result in additional funding for the Navy.
18. For the official and detailed breakdown of the Mediterranean Fleet, see the Navy's Understanding Soviet Naval Deployments, 4th Ed. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1981), p. 17.
19. In October 1973 the Soviets reinforced their Mediterranean Fleet with a final total of 95 ships. Of that number, half were major combatants. See Watson, p. 111. The Soviets routinely circumvent

the provisions of the Montreaux Convention which requires advance notification of warship transit through the Turkish Straits. This is done by multiple advance contingency notifications. See Jesse W. Lewis The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976), p. 72.

20. See NATO Anti-Submarine Warfare: Strategy, Requirements and the Need for Cooperation, A North Atlantic Assembly Paper (Brussels, 1982). The Sub-Committee on Defense Co-operation (ASW) concluded that should priority be given for the use of carriers in the Mediterranean theater, the outcome of the Atlantic SLOC campaign was in jeopardy. See pp. 26-27.
21. Finland cooperated with the German Navy in World War II in mining the Gulf of Finland to prevent transit by the Soviet Baltic Fleet. The USSR also laid mine fields here. See Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, The Soviets as Naval Opponents 1941-1945 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), pp. 11-62. In addition to mines, the Germans and Finns also used ASW nets.
22. Admiral Ruge is especially critical of the German General Staff for its failure to appreciate the use of the Baltic SLOC to support land operations in the USSR. Ibid, p. 11.
23. Soviet merchant ships are capable of laying mines. Admiral James D. Watkins, now Chief of Naval Operations, in a speech entitled "Peace Through Strength," given to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, May 11, 1982 (mimeo transcript of speech, p. 4).
24. Jan S. Breemer shares this conclusion that the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets will not exit in time of war. See his "The Soviet High Seas Fleet of the 1990's: Design for a 'Swing Strategy'?" Naval War College Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, March - April 1981, p. 42.
25. All sources agree this is now the case.
26. "Russians Said to Have Built Submarine Base Near Japan," New York Times, October 24, 1982, p. 4. "Sub Base reported in Kuriles," Washington Times, October 25, 1982, p. 7. Both reports are based on Japanese and American sources reported in the mass circulation Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun.
27. United States, Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power, 2nd Ed., (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 99.
28. For an interesting examination of how such a campaign might be conducted, see the United States Office of Technology Assessment MX Missile Basing (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1981), pp. 178-182. The Sea of Okhotsk contains some 582,000 mi<sup>2</sup> of ocean area.



29. 2,451 Soviets are on the islands compared to 1189 other nationals. See General Sir Anthony Farrar-Huckley. "The Influence of the Northern Flank Upon the Mastery of the Seas," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, May-June 1982, p. 9.
30. Ruge, throughout. This is one of his major criticisms, citing that had the USSR risked their surface ships more often, their Navy might have had a greater impact on the war.

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